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October 21, 2009

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**STATE LEGISLATORS URGE MTA BOARD TO ENSURE NEW
TRANSIT PROJECTS, INCLUDING THE CRENSHAW/SOUTH BAY
CORRIDOR, COMPETE FOR EQUITABLE FUNDING**

*State, Federal and Local elected officials have now urged the MTA to
develop a more inclusive strategy to maximize federal funding*

LOS ANGELES – A group of California legislators, echoing concerns raised by a bipartisan coalition of the County’s Congressional delegation, today sent a letter to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority board calling for the panel to ensure that new transit projects are allowed to compete for federal funding.

“Metro’s request of the Federal government must be geographically representative of the entire region,” the eight lawmakers, who represent Senate and Assembly districts in the county, said in a letter to Ara Najarian, chairman of the MTA Board. The panel is scheduled to act Thursday on a Long Range Transportation Plan.

On Tuesday, 14 members of Congress sent a similar letter to the MTA, urging the agency to develop a “more inclusive, regional and longer-term strategy” to maximize federal funding for new projects, including the Crenshaw/South Bay Transit Corridor.

That project is being championed by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, whose motion calling on the MTA Board to address concerns raised in the

Congressional letter was unanimously approved Tuesday by the Board of Supervisors.

The MTA is investing \$40 billion in Measure R money over the next 30 years. Approved by voters in 2008, the measure raised the county sales tax by a half cent to fund transit improvements that are representative of the entire region.

In addition, the staff of the MTA has estimated the County should be receiving \$200 million in federal funding annually. But the state, federal and local lawmakers say the agency is not drawing down as many federal dollars as possible.

“With a new administration in Washington, there exists new opportunities for transit funding and partnerships with the Federal government,” the state lawmakers said in their letter.

They noted the MTA board last month voted to seek federal funding for the Westside Subway Extension and the Regional Connector.

“In keeping with the spirit of Measure R’s geographic representation, Metro’s ‘request’ of the federal government should follow that same rationale and provide for an equitable and rational geographic balance,” the lawmakers said in their letter.

The federal funding request, they said, “should include the Crenshaw/LAX Corridor and the Gold Line Foothill Extension, projects slated for construction within the first decade of Measure R.”

The letter was signed Sens. Curren Price, Rod Wright, Gloria Romero, Carol Lieu and Ron Calderon and Assembly members Steve Bradford, Isadore Hall and Ted Lieu.

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